

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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P R 051730Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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USIA WASHDC
USMISSION USNATO
USMMR SHAPE BE
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES ITALY
CINCOSOUTH NAPLES

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SECDEF FOR ASDPA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, NATO, MNUC, NPG, IT
SUBJECT: SECDEF VISIT TO ITALY

REF.: A. CINCOSOUTH 041345Z OCT 77 B. USCINCEUR 041720Z OCT 77

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WHICH FOLLOW REPRESENT COMBINED VIEWS
OF EMBASSY AND HAVE BEEN COORDINATED WITH MR. GOLDSMITH, SPECIAL
ASSISTANT, ASDPA. WE NOTE THAT REFTELS WERE NOT COORDINATED WITH
AMEMBASSY ROME.

(1) Q. WHY WAS THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ACCIDENT INVOLVING THE USS
RAY MADE IN WASHINGTON AND NOT IN ITALY?

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A. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS A STANDARD ONE WHICH IS MADE BY THE
US NAVY AND THE OTHER AMERICAN ARMED FORCES WHEN ANY INCIDENTS
HAPPEN WHICH MIGHT INTEREST OR WORRY THE FAMILIES OF SERVICEMEN.
HAD THE ACCIDENT BEEN A MAJOR ONE, INVOLVING SUCH THINGS AS
A COMPROMISE OF THE SHIP'S SAFETY OR DANGERS TO OTHER SHIPPING,
FOR EXAMPLE, THE DIFFERENT PROCEDURES MIGHT HAVE BEEN USED.
BUT SINCE NO DANGER TO EITHER THE SHIP'S SAFETY OR THE SURROUNDING

WATERS WAS IN ANY WAY INVOLVED, THE STANDARD ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE.

(2). Q. IS THERE NUCLEAR DANGER TO THE PEOPLE OF LA MADDALENA FROM THE PRESENCE OF NUCLEAR SUBMARINES AT THE BASE OF SANTO STEFANO?

A. THERE ISN'T REALLY A BASE THERE, MERELY A SUPPORT SHIP. THE SUPPORT SHIP PROVIDES MINOR MECHANICAL REPAIR FACILITIES AND ALLOWS THE SUBMARINES TO BE ON STATION LONGER WITHOUT RETURNING TO THEIR BASE IN THE U.S. THE OCCASIONAL PRESENCE OF NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINES CREATES NO DANGER WHATSOEVER TO THE CITIZENS OF THE AREA. THE SEVEREST TESTING HAS BEEN DONE TO ASSURE THIS, TESTING WHICH ALSO ASSURES THE SAFETY OF THE CITIZENS OF AMERICAN PORT TOWNS TOUCHED BY THESE VESSELS.

(3) Q. HOW COULD A SOPHISTICATED SUBMARINE LIKE THE RAY RUN AGROUND?

A. THAT IS A GOOD QUESTION. YOU CAN BELIEVE I WANT TO KNOW THE ANSWER. AT THIS TIME AN OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION IS IN PROGRESS WHICH WILL PROVIDE SUCH AN ANSWER. IN THE MEANTIME, IT IS SAFE TO GENERALIZE BY SAYING SOME RISKS ARE ALWAYS PRESENT IN MILITARY EXERCISES. THIS IS WHY WE HAVE EXERCISES, TO TEST AND IMPROVE OUR PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES.

(4). Q. DON'T THE SUBMARINES AT LA MADDALENA CARRY NUCLEAR MISSILES?
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A. AS YOU KNOW, WE NEVER DISCUSS THE SPECIFIC WEAPONS CARRIED ON ANY OF OUR SHIPS. HOWEVER, I CAN SAY THAT THE SUBMARINES WHICH CALL AT LA MADDALENA ARE SO-CALLED "ATTACK" SUBMARINES WHICH, IN TIME OF WAR, WOULD HAVE AS THEIR PRIMARY TARGET THE ENEMY SUBMARINE FORCE.

(5) Q. IS THE U.S. NAVY GOING TO BUILD SOME HOUSING TO ACCOMMODATE ITS OWN PEOPLE AND THEREFORE TAKE THE PRESSURE OFF THE LOCAL HOUSING MARKET (AT LA MADDALENA)?

(SEE REF. B)

(6) Q. IS THE UNITED STATES PLANNING TO INTRODUCE THE N-BOMB IN ITALY?

A. THIS NEW WEAPON, WHICH WE CALL THE REDUCED BLAST/ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON, BECAUSE THAT IS A MORE ACCURATE DESCRIPTION, IS NOT AS FAR ALONG AS YOUR QUESTION SUGGESTS. DEVELOPMENT HAS PROCEEDED, BUT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS YET TO MAKE A DECISION ON PRODUCTION. OBVIOUSLY, THEREFORE, NO DECISION HAS YET BEEN TAKEN ON DEPLOYMENT. ONE CAN INFER FROM THE CHARACTERISTICS

OF THE WEAPON, ITS UTILITY AS AN ANTI-TANK WEAPON, THAT IT IS INTENDED TO DETER LARGE-SCALE ARMoured ATTACK. BEYOND THAT I CAN'T GO, EXCEPT TO SAY THAT, SHOULD THE PRESIDENT DECIDE ON PRODUCTION OF THE WEAPON, FULL CONSULTATION WITH OUR NATO ALLIES WOULD PRECEDE ANY DETERMINATION TO DEPLOY IN THE NATO AREA.

(7) Q. ISN'T THE N-BOMB A PARTICULARLY INHUMANE WEAPON?

A. QUITE THE CONTRARY. ONE MUST SPEAK, OF COURSE, WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE FACT THAT ALL WEAPONS ARE INHUMANE. IN THESE RELATIVE TERMS, THE REDUCED BLAST/ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON HAS SOME SPECIAL HUMANE ADVANTAGES.

THE WEAPON WAS SPECIFICALLY DEVELOPED TO BE EFFECTIVE AGAINST
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ATTACKING ARMOUR. IT DIFFERS FROM OTHER NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN THE SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED DANGER OF DOING HARM TO CIVILIAN LIVES AND PROPERTY. IT IS DESIGNED (FOR USE) AGAINST SPECIFIC MILITARY TARGETS, WHILE SAVING LIVES OUTSIDE THAT AREA AND SAVING TOWNS AND FARMS WHICH MIGHT LIE DIRECTLY WITHIN THE BATTLE FIELD AREA. THOSE ARE SOME OF ITS GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS: MANY OF THE DETAILS ON THIS WEAPON ARE ALREADY IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.

THE SECOND REASON WHY IT WOULD BE INACCURATE TO FOCUS ON THE WEAPON'S ALLEGED INHUMANITY IS THAT IT IS NOT A DEVICE WHICH WE ARE DEVELOPING SECRETLY IN ORDER TO SPRING AN ENEMY. ITS MISSION, IF DEPLOYED, WOULD BE TO DETER, TO CONVINCE A POTENTIAL FOE THAT AGGRESSION WOULD NOT SUCCEED, AND THEREBY TO REDUCE THE CHANCE THAT HE WOULD MAKE A BAD DECISION.
(MORE)

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.....DECISION.

(8) Q. DOESN'T DEPLOYMENT OF THE N-BOMB LOWER THE THRESHOLD FOR
THE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS?

A. THERE ARE MANY FACTORS WHICH DETERMINE THAT SUPPOSED THRESHOLD.
THE MOST IMPORTANT IS THE DECISION-MAKING OF A POTENTIAL AGRESSOR.
ALL OF OUR DEPLOYED FORCES -- AND THIS WOULD BE TRUE OF THE
REDUCED BLAST/ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON IF IT WERE TO BE DEPLOYED
-- ARE DESIGNED, AS THIER PRIMARY MISSION, TO DETER, TO HAVE THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT OF LEADING POTENTIAL AGGRESSOR TO DECIDE
NO TO ACT.

ANOTHER CRITICAL FACTOR IS THE VIEW OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNTRIES
INVOLVED ABOUT THAT THRESHOLD. PRESIDENT CARTER, WHEN HE
FIRST SPOKE PUBLICLY ABOUT THE REDUCED BLAST/ENHANCED RADITION
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WEAPON, RAISED YOUR QUESTION HIMSELF, SHOWED HIS APPRECIATION OF
IT BY CALLING IT A "PROSPECT SOBERING TO ALL OF US." THAT IS WHY
WE ARE WORKING SO HARD TO MAKE PROGRESS IN ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIA-
TIONS.

(9) Q. HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE DESIRE OF THE U.S. TO LOWER THE
NUMBER OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND PRESIDENT CARTER'S DESIRE TO
LIMIT ARMAMENTS WITH THE DECISION TO GO AHEAD WITH PRODUCTION
OF THIS TERRIBLE NEW WEAPON?

A. (THE PROPER RESPONSE TO THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WEAPON AS A
"TERRIBLE NEW WEAPON" IS IN THE PRECEDING TWO ANSWERS.)

IN THE FIRST PLACE, THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WEAPONS DOES NOT ALWAYS
MEAN AN ADDITION TO THE STOCK OF DEPLOYED WEAPONS. THEY USUALLY
IMPROVE UPON, AND REPLACE,, SOMETHING ELSE.

THIS PARTICULAR WEAPON DOES NOT AFFECT THE SALT NEGOTIATIONS AT ALL.

IT IS DESIGNED FOR TACTICAL USE ONLY.

WHAT THE UNITED STATES IS SEEKING IS A NEGOTIATED REDUCTION IN NUCLEAR ARMS WHICH WILL ENHANCE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, RATHER THAN ANY UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS WHICH WOULD DESTABILIZE THE BALANCE OF FORCES AND REDUCE SECURITY. IN THE SAME WAY, IN THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS, WE SEEK A NEGOTIATED REDUCTION OF CERTAIN FORCE LEVELS IN A WAY WHICH WOULD INCREASE SECURITY RATHER THAN DESTABILIZE. SUCCESSFUL ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS DEPEND UPON THE OTHER SIDE'S NOT BEING TEMPTED BY THE BELIEF THAT WESTERN FORCES ARE SO FEEBLE AS TO BE UNABLE TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO AGGRESSIVE ACTS, TO RESPOND AT A LEVEL APPROPRIATE TO THE AGGRESSIVE ACT.

ALL THE NATO ALLIES HAVE RECOGNIZED THAT A SOUND ALLIANCE, BOTH UNCLASSIFIED

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POLITICALLY AND MILITARILY, IS THE NECESSARY BASE FOR SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EAST. IF THE PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT OF THESE WEAPONS WOULD ADD TO THE HEALTH OF THE ALLIANCE, WOULD BE A FACTOR OF DETERRANCE RATHER THAN INSTABILITY, THEN THIS WOULD BE A POINT IN FAVOR OF THEIR BEING PRODUCED AND DEPLOYED.

(10) A. HAS THE UNITED STATES BEEN PRESSURING ITALY AND OTHER NATO COUNTRIES TO SUPPORT THE DECISION TO PRODUCE THE BOMB?

A. NO. WE HAVE BEEN, AND WILL BE, EXPLAINING THE REDUCED BLAST/ ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON TO OUR ALLIES, SHARING OUR THINKING ABOUT IT WITH THEM. WE SHARE THE SAME GENERAL INTERESTS: A HEALTHY ALLIANCE; STRONG DETERRENT FORCES AND, IF NECESSARY, STRONG DEFENSIVE FORCES; A CONFIDENT, FORTHCOMING NEGOTIATING STANCE, AND, IN CASE OF CONFLICT, THE AVAILABILITY OF WEAPNS TO RESOND ADEQUATELY TO THE THREAT WHILE, AT THE SAME TIME, PRESERVING AS MUCH CIVILIAN LIFE AND PROPERTY AS POSSIBLE. IT IS NATURAL, THEREFORE, THAT WE AND OUR ALLIES ARE INTERESTED IN SOME OF THE POSSIBILITIES OFFERED BY THIS WEAPON. AND BECAUSE WE SHARE THE SAME GOALS FOR THE ALLIANCE, THE CONSULTATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT HAVE BEEN, WILL BE, GOOD EXCHANGES OF VIEW.

(11) Q. WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT ON NATO, IN YOUR OPINION, OF COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT OF ITALY?

A. PRESIDENT CARTER HAS INDICATED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT WE DO NOT INTEND TO INVOLVE OURSELVES IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES. HE HAS ALSO NOTED THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME I ITS HISTORY ALL NATO MEMBERS HVE DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENTS, WHICH WE CONSIDER TO BE A POSITIVE EVOLUTION. WE PREFER THAT NATO MEMBERS CONTINUE TO BE GOVERNED BY DEMOCRATIC REGIMES WHICH SHARE A COMMON POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, AND WE HOPE THAT TOTALITARIAN ELEMENTS DO

NOT ACQUIRE AN INFLUENTIAL OR DOMINANT ROLE IN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES.
S THE PRESIDENT HAS STATED, "MY HOPE IS THAT DEMOCRATIC PARTIES
WOULD PREVAIL DURING THE COMING YEARS IN A STRUGGLE FOR POLI-
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TICAL POWER." PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ALSO SAID THAT, "IF THE COMMU-
NIST PARTIES SHOULD BECOME PART OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF EUROPEAN
COUNTRIES, THERE WOULD BE CONCERN ABOUT NATO DEFENSE. THIS WOULD
NOT MEAN THOSE COUNTRIES WOULD HAVE TO WITHDRAW FROM NATO. BUT THERE
IS DOUBT ABOUT WHETHER THE LOYALTIES OF SOME OF THE COMMUNIST
LEADERS MIGHT GO TO THEIR OWN NATIONS OR TO THE SOVIET UNION.
SO THERE WOULD BE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SECURITY OF SPECIFIC
ADVANCED WEAPONS SYSTEMS AND MILITARY PLANNING."

(12) Q. DO YOU MEAN BY THAT STATEMENT, MR. SECRETARY, THAT THE
ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY IS NOT A DEMOCRATIC PARTY?

A. I DON'T THINK THAT I WANT TO CHARACTERIZE THE NATURE OF ANY
ITALIAN POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. THAT IS A JUDGMENT THAT IS BEST
MADE BY ITALIANS THEMSELVES ON THE BASIS OF THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE
WHICH IS AVAILABLE TO THEM.

(13) Q. (BEFORE NPG) WHAT WILL BE DISCUSSED IN BARI? WILL THE
N-BOMB BE DISCUSSED?

A. THE AGENDA OF MEETINGS OF A NUCLEAR PLANNING GROUP IS NEVER
ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY BEFORE THE MEETING. NOR IS IT A "CLOSED"
AGENDA: MINISTERS CAN RAISE SUBJECTS WHICH CONCERN THEM.
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